

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MARCH 17, 2022 AT 7:30 PM**

Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Anne Harrigan-Secretary; Faith Ham; Andrew Martelli; Samantha Rosenberg

Board Members Absent: Timothy White

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer

Public access made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools. Public comments were accepted at CPSCovid19@cheshire.k12.ct.us.

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:30 P.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Annabelle Kailan, student representative for the 2021/22 school year, reported that Rowan Scassellati is not present tonight as he is in the spring play. She reported on recent and upcoming events at Cheshire High School. The spring musical, Chicago, will be held from March 23 to 26; This past Monday was Pi Day and twelve CHS students went to SCSU for a math puzzle tournament; seniors hosted a Mario Cart event which raised \$200 for the senior prom and a virtual parent night and financial aid night for juniors was held. Forty-five students had an in-person tour of the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology, where they toured the state-of-the-art facility on the Raytheon Technologies Research Center campus. Students learned about different types of technologies used in additive manufacturing versus precision machining, automation, and metrology. Cheshire High School also raised \$1,700 for Ukraine and they are in the process of raising funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Anna also gave an update on high school sports.

Board members thanked Anna for her thorough report.

2. AUDIENCE

Jane Bate, 454 Riverside Drive. Ms. Bate said she is against mandated vaccinations and shared her reasons why. Dr. Solan responded that Cheshire Public Schools did not mandate vaccinations.

Sharon Houck, 402 Cardinal Lane. Ms. Houck said a student at a previous meeting said the students are forced to watch CNN every Friday afternoon and asked if they are allowed to watch FOX news as well. She said no political shows should be shown.

Ms. Silano responded that the CNN videos are call CNN10, and they are utilized during Social Studies classes. It is an unbiased show which contains news clips of the latest news and current events. The videos are available for anyone to view on YouTube.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held March 14, 2022.

Ms. Ham, Chair of the Curriculum Committee, reported on the meeting held March 14, 2022. At that meeting, Cathy Sullivan, Pam Gunneson, and John Perosino gave an executive summary of the Health and Physical Education (PE) presentation that was previously given to the Cheshire Curriculum Council (CCC) on March 9th. The presentation first highlighted the broad skills and PE specific skills at the elementary and secondary levels. The presentation discussed, by grade level, key health topics such as nutrition, decision making, drugs and alcohol, diseases, sexual health, and relationships. It was emphasized that each topic is addressed in an age-appropriate way at every grade level/grade level span. The final portion of the presentation included some of the long-term goals recommended by the PE/Health CCC Committee. Some of those goals included promoting total wellness to staff, students, and community; increasing PE/Health contact time K-12; continuing to improve State Physical Fitness scores; increasing PE/Health specific professional development opportunities; and addressing facility needs to support PE/Health programming. Ms. Ham commented that after hearing this report, she recommends finding ways to provide our students the State recommended number of hours of PE, as we do fall short in hours for both the elementary and high school levels.

Next, Ms. Ham reported that Committee members are reviewing policies and procedures from other districts regarding reconsideration of library books and classroom resources. The Committee will be recommending that the current policy, which is under the Community Relations Series of the Policy Manual, be moved to the Instruction Series. They will also make an effort to inform the community where to find these procedures. The Committee will share a draft policy at the April Curriculum Committee meeting for recommendation.

Ms. Rosenberg asked for clarification regarding where we are short time in PE hours for our students. Ms. Silano responded that, at the elementary level, if you do the math, it comes out to maybe three hours and 45 minutes. And one of the recommendations suggest 4 hours. The students are getting that amount of time in health. In addition, when you look at the much younger grades, they are having two recesses a day.

Mr. Grippo said, at the last meeting there were audience comments about controversial topics in our Health program and asked if any of those were found.

Ms. Silano answered that the recently approved curriculum framework for Health was just released last week. This five-year curriculum review was based on the previous standards because those were not approved and sanctioned by the State Department of Education for the curriculum that they were writing, or will write, to be aligned with that new framework. So, they do cover all of those content areas. She said she can share the former content areas. She said she is not familiar with the topics that Mr. Grippo alluded to, but our PE teachers really have gone above and beyond to ensure they stay current with the types of games and activities that they provide to students. They have many high school students involved in sports, clubs and activities, even those clubs and activities that would lend itself to some of the health related topics. For example, our feminism club at the high school has brought in speakers on things such as sexual assault. We offer a myriad of topics at the high school, even outside of what is stereotypically held a PE class.

Mr. Perugini added that he believes Mr. Grippo is talking about accusations of transgenderism, critical race theory, things that were mentioned by the public. Mr. Grippo said he just wants to be sure the topics are age appropriate. Mr. Perugini said that they looked at materials and have not seen anything inappropriate, but if parents have concerns, they should let administrators know.

B. FINANCE

I. Finance Report

Mr. Grippo asked Mr. Masciana for the Finance Report. Mr. Masciana reported that the Board's budget for the year is \$77,001,052. There are no major variances to report at this time, although there are some impacts related to inflation, mostly in fuel prices. He noted that they were able to increase the expenditure cap on non-payroll items to 70%. Therefore, the schools are preparing for the purchases of materials that they haven't made earlier in the year. Also, at this time of the year, we prepare for maintenance projects that they want to complete over the summer. Mr. Masciana said he is highly confident that they will meet the budget this year.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Mr. Masciana reported that claims were \$745,821 for the month of February, which is an improvement over January and below the \$815,500 per month budget. The balance in the reserve fund increased by \$69,762 bringing the reserve balance to \$1,461,193, about 1.62 months' worth of

claims coverage. So the trend is moving in the right direction. He reminded the Board that January marks the beginning of the new HSA plan year, so employees are still meeting their deductibles at this time.

III. Discussion/Action Regarding the 2021/22 Operating Budget

Mr. Masciana reported that at their meeting held on March 8, 2022, the Cheshire Town Council unanimously passed resolution #030822-2 authorizing a \$1,500,000 additional appropriation to the Board of Education's 2021/22 budget, increasing it from \$77,001,052 to \$78,501,052.

The intention of this additional appropriation is for the Board of Education to use it to increase the balance in the Medical Benefits Reserve Fund. The Board needs to take action at this time in order to allocate the \$1,500,000 to a budget account. It is recommended, based on the Council's intention, to allocate the \$1,500,000 to the Medical Benefits Account, so that the funds can then be contributed to the Medical Benefits Reserve Fund.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo, seconded by Ms. Rosenberg.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education allocates the \$1,500,000 additional appropriation to its 2021/22 budget approved by the Town Council to the Medical Benefits Account - Object # 520102, and further directs the \$1,500,000 to be contributed to the Medical Benefits Reserve Fund.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

Ms. Rosenberg asked Dr. Solan to discuss information regarding Food Services that he previously shared with the Board. Dr. Solan said, right now, school districts in America is reimbursed at the summer rate through the Federal Department of Agriculture, which is about \$4.50 per student meal. The government decided that they will not extend the reimbursement into next academic year. The result for us is that the roughly \$4.50 reimbursement we are receiving per meal, drops to about \$3.50 per meal. That, coupled with the increase in the minimum wage on July 1st to \$14.00 per hour, and the difficulty with food supply and inflation costs, leave us very concerned about whether we would have to make a substantial raise in the cost of meals to continue to serve a meal that meets the qualifications for the federal school lunch program.

Dr. Solan said the hope is that there can be a conversation between State legislators and the School Nutrition Association here in Connecticut about the impending issue that we have in these current circumstances.

Board members discussed the cost of meals and options for next year. Ms. Harrigan said she is against raising prices for families.

C. **PERSONNEL**

I. **Non-Renewal of Interim Contract Teachers**

Dr. Solan noted that, Pursuant to Section 10-151 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Board of Education may, prior to May 1st, authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of Interim Contract Teachers. In addition, the Board of Education may, prior to May 1st, authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of certain non-tenured teachers. Historically in Cheshire, this has been done in the case of long-term substitutes, teachers on interim contract and an occasional teacher for cause. This year, because of budgetary concerns, it has reluctantly been recommended that the Board of Education authorize the Superintendent not to renew the contracts of all first and second year non-tenured, certified, professional employees subject to the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act. This is an annual action and is not taken for cause; but it is taken solely for budgetary purposes in the case our budget is reduced and staff must be reduced.

MOTION by Mr. Perugini and seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. 10-151, authorizes the Superintendent to non-renew the teacher contracts of all certified, professional employees, serving under an interim contract subject to C.G.S. 10-151 at the end of the 2021/2022 school year.*

Ms. Rosenberg said that as a teacher, she wishes there was another way to handle this, as it can be a very stressful time for teachers. Dr. Solan agreed. He confirmed that 45 letters were sent out to non-tenured teachers this year. He said this year there is a very low probability that there will be any reductions, and they have relayed that information to the teachers.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

II. **Non-Renewal of Non-Tenured Teachers**

MOTION by Mr. Perugini and seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education, pursuant to C.G.S. 10-151, authorize the Superintendent to non-renew the teacher contracts of all non-tenured, certified, professional employees that are in the first and second years under contract for the Cheshire Public Schools subject to C.G.S. 10-151 at the end of the 2021-2022 school year, and further to authorize the Superintendent to communicate written notice of such non-renewal to the affected teachers.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

D. PLANNING

I. Report on Meeting Held March 16, 2022

II. Review and Discuss Educational Specifications

III. School Modernization Update

Mr. Martelli noted the Committee reviewed the Education Specifications for the two new elementary schools, and the Board has received a copy of the specifications. There will be a Planning Committee of the Whole meeting held prior to the Middle School Showcase on April 7, 2022. At that meeting, the hope is for the Planning Committee to approve the Specifications and forward them to the entire Board for a vote at their business meeting on April 21, 2022.

Mr. Martelli reported the enrollment projections and demographic study is being done by SLAM Collaborative. A draft was received but there is still some work that needs to be done. There is a meeting next week with the Town Planner to go through all of the building permits which have been issued, as well as all pending applications and approved new subdivisions in Town to integrate those into the enrollment projections. Additionally, a traffic study has been underway for the Marion Road site and once we receive that, we will be able to project the impact of the school on that neighborhood. He asked Mr. Masciana for a summary of the Ed Specs for both the Norton School and the North End Elementary School based on total square footages.

Mr. Masciana added that Ed Specs are required documents as part of the School Construction Grant. Mr. Dan Hanson prepared the specs. He met with about 60 staff members from each of the schools and toured all of the schools. He reviewed the documents that were shared with the Board.

For Norton Elementary School, for general education programs, full day kindergarten would have five rooms, each classroom is 1,100 square feet, early elementary Grades 1 and 2, would have 10 classrooms with 950 square feet. The general education total square footage is 52,475 square feet. For Special Education there are four classrooms, rooms specialized

for occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech, a social worker, psychologist and a counseling room. The total for special education programs specifically, is 3,325 square feet. Administrative and support facilities, including the principal's office, the conference room, and health services, totaling 9,275 square feet, and the total for this building would be 65,075 square feet of usable square feet and program space. This does not include hallways, and bathrooms, and all the other spaces that go into the four walls.

For the North End Elementary School, the basic square footage for general education, special education and administration is exactly the same. The only addition is 14,650 square feet for the early childhood programs that are currently housed at Darcey, including the Birth to Three Program as well as the Early Intervention, Half-Day Pre-K programs, and the Smart Start pre-k program.

Mr. Masciana explained that these square footages are based on the expected enrollment projections. He said it is important that we can take full advantage of the State reimbursement on these new school projects, which is about 35% of the eligible cost. We can't build a building that's too big, that exceeds the expected enrollment, because we won't get the full state reimbursement.

Mr. Perugini said April is a critical month. The final draft of the Ed Specs is due and the budget and redistricting is due April 1st for review. This will be presented to the Town Council and then the Board of Education has to vote in approve Ed Specs by April 21st. He applauded everyone for all of the work that has been done.

Ms. Ham noted her concern with what happened at the state-level where Farmington was charged an additional million dollars because of a discovery that the formulas used to calculate the reimbursement rate were wrong. Dr. Solan said from what he understands, that was a misappropriation of the formula. He said they continue to engage in conversations with OSCGR. Mr. Martelli noted that the reimbursement rate for this project has already been set and will not change.

E. POLICY

I. Report on Meeting Held March 8, 2022

Mr. Grippo reported that the Committee met to review policies for first and second readings.

II. First Reading of Policies

4118.11 Personnel – Non-Discrimination. This is an Equal Employment Opportunity policy for non-discrimination. This update is in regard to age

discrimination. We do not require people to provide dates of birth, or other age-revealing documents, but we do look for years of service at past positions. The following language will be added to our current policy: *“The District recognizes that it is a discriminatory practice to request or require a prospective employee’s age, date of birth, dates of attendance at or date of graduation from an educational institution on an initial employment application, unless requesting or requiring such information is based on a bona fide occupational qualification or need, or when such information is required to comply with any provision of state or federal law.”* This essentially that we do not ask for a resume that requires dates of employment or graduation dates.

III. Review Policies for a Second Reading

Mr. Grippo noted that the following policies were reviewed for a second reading, with no changes made since the first reading:

1101.1 Community Relations – Parent Involvement

6146 Instruction – Graduation Requirements

6146.1 Instruction – Grading Systems

6148 Instruction – FAFSA Completion Program

6159 Instruction – IEP/Special Education Program

Ms. Rosenberg reminded Mr. Grippo that the Committee also reviewed 9321.2 Bylaw – Time, Place, Notification, Type of Meetings - Electronic Board of Education Meetings. Mr. Grippo thanked Ms. Rosenberg and explained that as of April 30th, the Board is no longer allow to have remote meetings. Future Legislation will dictate if they are allowed to meet remotely going forward.

F. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Board of Education Meetings Held February 17, 2022

MOTION by Mr. Perugini, seconded by Ms. Harrigan.

MOVED that the Board of Education approve the Minutes from the meeting held on February 17, 2022.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

6. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan noted that March is Board Member Appreciation Month. He said he never really appreciated the amount of time and energy that board members put in without any pay or real recognition as they support the school system and make sure that you know we provide our students and community with a great experience. He thanked Board members for serving on the Cheshire Board of Education and presented each with a small gift of appreciation.

The Superintendent reported that tomorrow is a Professional Development Day. He said he spent time reviewing everything that Ms. Silano, Mr. Hanlon, and our instructional leadership team, including building-based instructional leaders have put together for tomorrow. He is incredibly impressed with how it really encapsulates our past, present and future with complex thinking, social emotional learning, and vision for high quality instruction. He reported the Cheshire Education Foundation Trivia night is taking place the following Saturday. He thanked Eileen Wildermann and the Culinary Services Department, in which he students are making special cupcakes as a fundraiser for the Cheshire Education Foundation.

He reported that earlier in the year, actually even dating back to last year, they began reviewing our district goals that were established from 2011 to 2021. Because of the pandemic, we never got the opportunity to work on these last year, and we are focused on making that transition this year. Conversations have begun with our stakeholders. He has started with our PTA's and PTO's. He encouraged parents to attend those meetings at their local school building, and provide feedback. He announced that an email address, CPSNextGeneration@cheshire.k12.ct.us has been established for the community to provide feedback.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Healthy Food Certification**

Mr. Masciana explained that this is an annual event where the board has to approve the following recommendations to continue with the Healthy Food Certification. This action applies to all food that is sold outside of reimbursable meals, which always meets the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. It is for food items that are sold a la carte at school stores, vending machines, or anything other than what is served for breakfast and lunch as a reimbursable meal. The benefit of doing this is that students, if they are served in the school, will always have food that meets the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. He noted the district also receives an additional 10 cents per meal reimbursement by participating in Healthy Food Certification. There are three motions, the first is the Board certifying that we will participate in the Healthy Foods Certification Program. The next two motions are exemptions, which allow for the sale of items, not during school hours, and not by

the school, at the concession stand, or any type of a bake sale that is held outside of school hours.

MOTION #1 by Mr. Perugini, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

MOVED that Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Cheshire Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to, school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or by non-school organizations and groups.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present, 6-0.

MOTION #2 by Mr. Perugini, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present, 6-0.

MOTION #3 by Mr. Perugini, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

MOVED that the Cheshire Board of Education will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store.

An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present, 6-0.

B. Chairperson’s Update

Mr. Perugini noted the Cheshire/Southington YMCA Polar Plunge was held since the last meeting, where he and Ms. Rosenberg participated, as well as a Town Councilor and administrators, Scott Jeffrey, and Ryan Murphy. Approximately \$100,000 .

Mr. Perugini noted there was a member of the Audience who was not present for the AUDIENCE portion of the meeting, who asked to speak. He called for a motion to amend the agenda.

MOTION by Mr. Perugini and seconded by Mr. Martelli.

MOVED to add a new Agenda Item 9. Public Comment.

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tucker Deming, 230 Oregon Road. Mr. Deming said he is against mandatory vaccinations for five to eleven year old children. He said we need to be vocal against vaccination mandates and vaccination smart cards as it will be the end of our freedoms.

10. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Ms. Ham, and seconded by Ms. Rosenberg, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk’s Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 4/1/2022.